



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

New River Gorge National River General Management Plan

Analysis of Park Resources
May 2006



What Happened at the May Public Meetings

What's Going on With What's Most Important at the Park?

ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CONSTRAINTS

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES

- Resources to be Protected
- Resources that Offer Visitor Opportunities

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Existing Visitor Opportunities
 - Levels of Use

PARK ACCESS

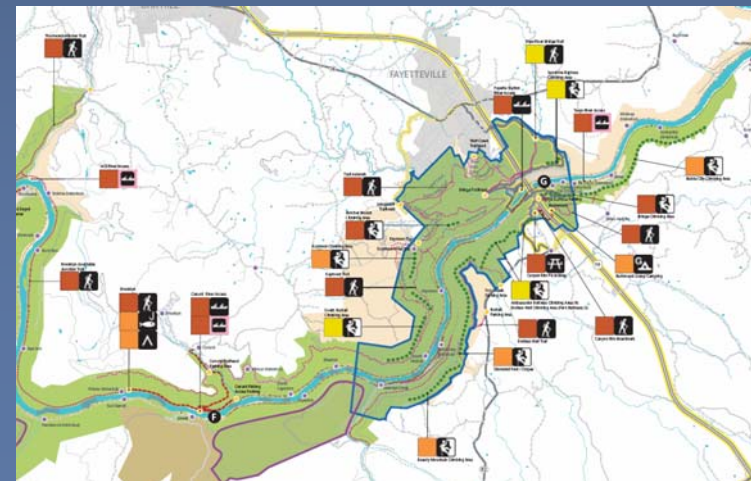
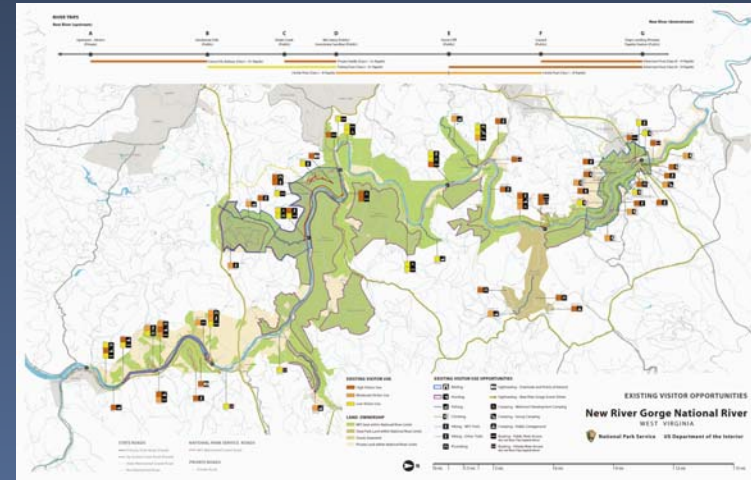
- Existing Park Access
- Opportunities and Constraints



The Analysis of Problems, Opportunities, and Constraints Focused on What's Most Important at the Park:

- Water Quality
- Hydrologic Features
- Geologic Resources and Mined Coal Areas
- Unfragmented Forest
- Rare Vegetation Communities
- Rare Species Diversity
- Historic Resources
- Vantage Points and Viewsheds
- Existing Visitor Opportunities
- Park Access

For Example:





At the May Public Meetings We Presented an Overview of Our Analysis and Invited the Public to Review the Findings and Speak with the Park's Resource Specialists





What's Most Important at the Park?



Significance Statement 2

The River and Its Resources

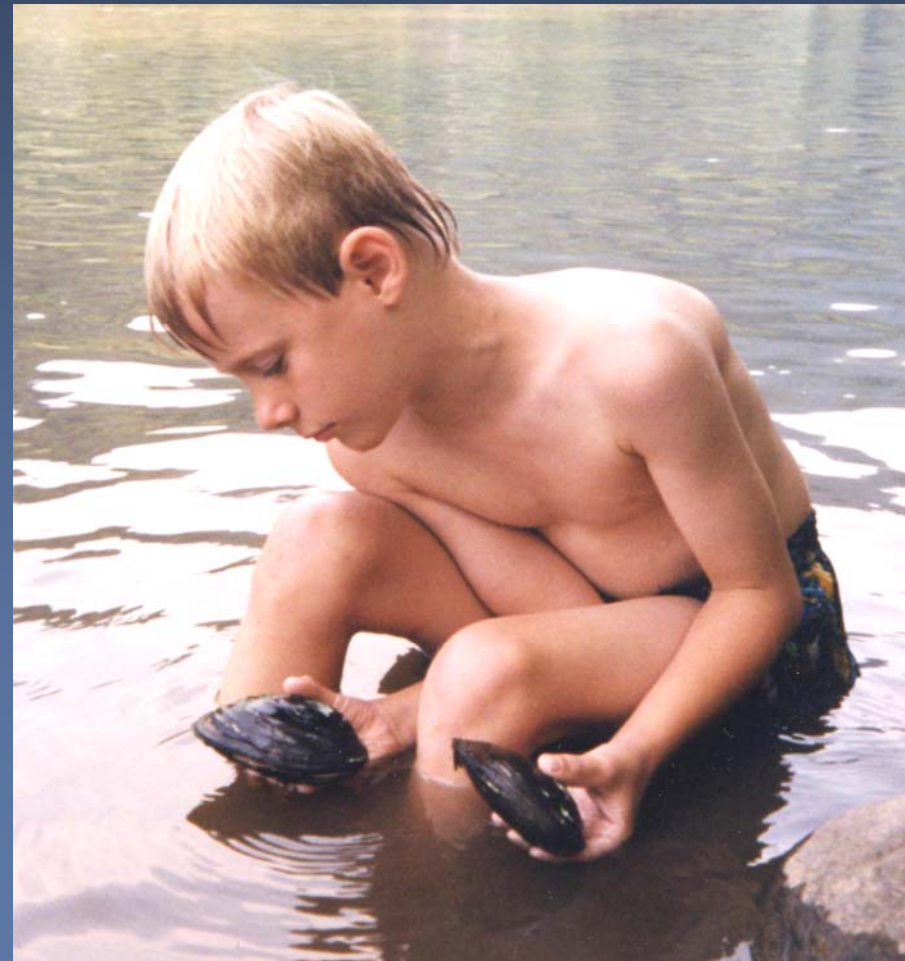
The waters of the New River system contain a mosaic of hydrologic features and aquatic habitats, support a unique aquatic ecosystem, and nourish a riparian zone that supports rare plants, animals, and communities.

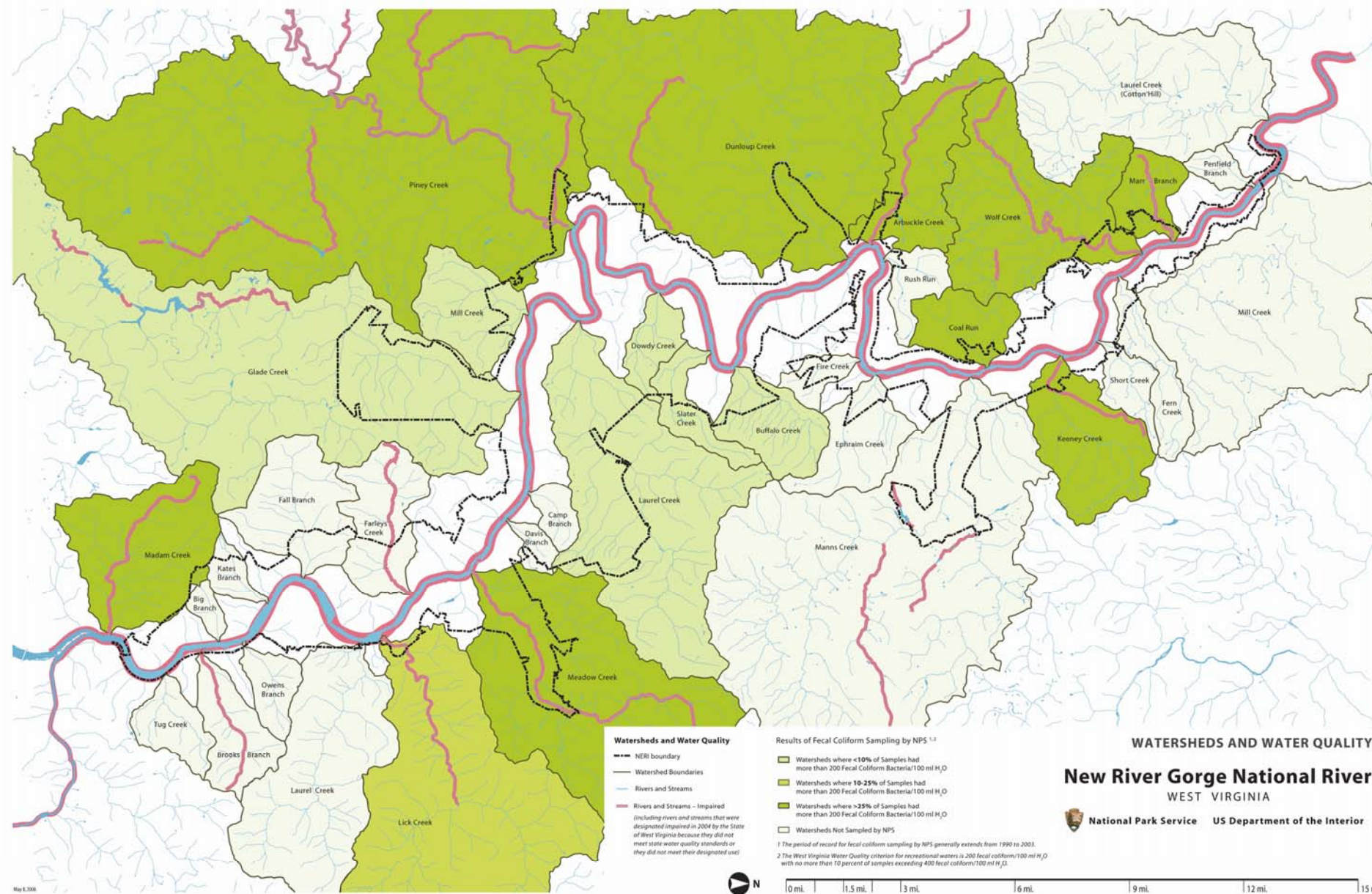


The River and Its Resources – GMP Issues

Water Quality

- pollutants entering the New River and its tributaries upstream of the park cause poor water quality conditions in the park
- park visitors contribute wastewater flows to the river that exacerbate already existing poor water quality conditions



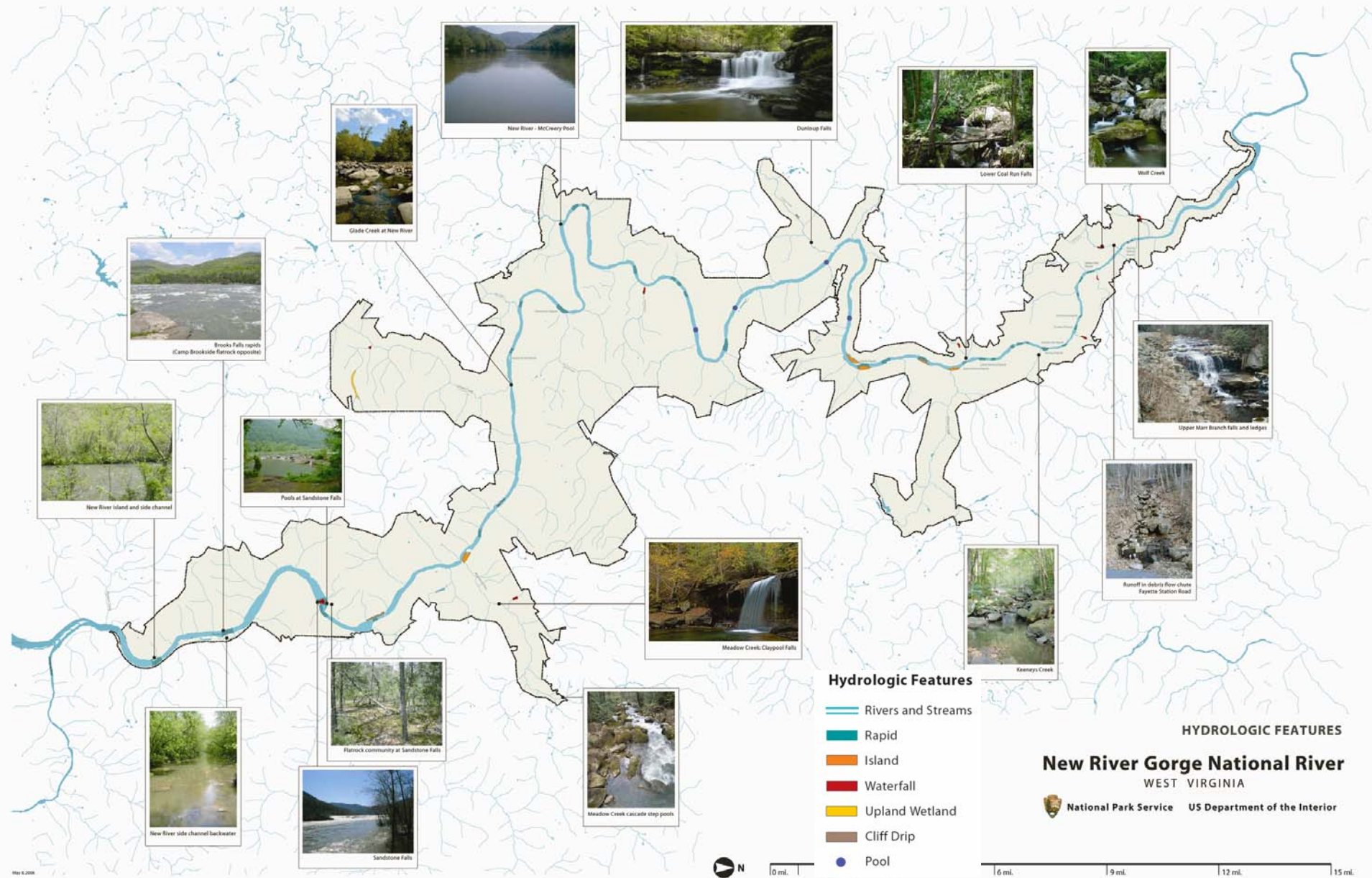


The River and Its Resources – GMP Issues

Experiencing the River and Its Resources

- many stories about the river and its resources – if told – would greatly enhance the visitor experience
- poor access to and through the park limits where visitors can go and how they can experience the river and its resources







What's Most Important at the Park?



Significance Statement 1

Geologic Features

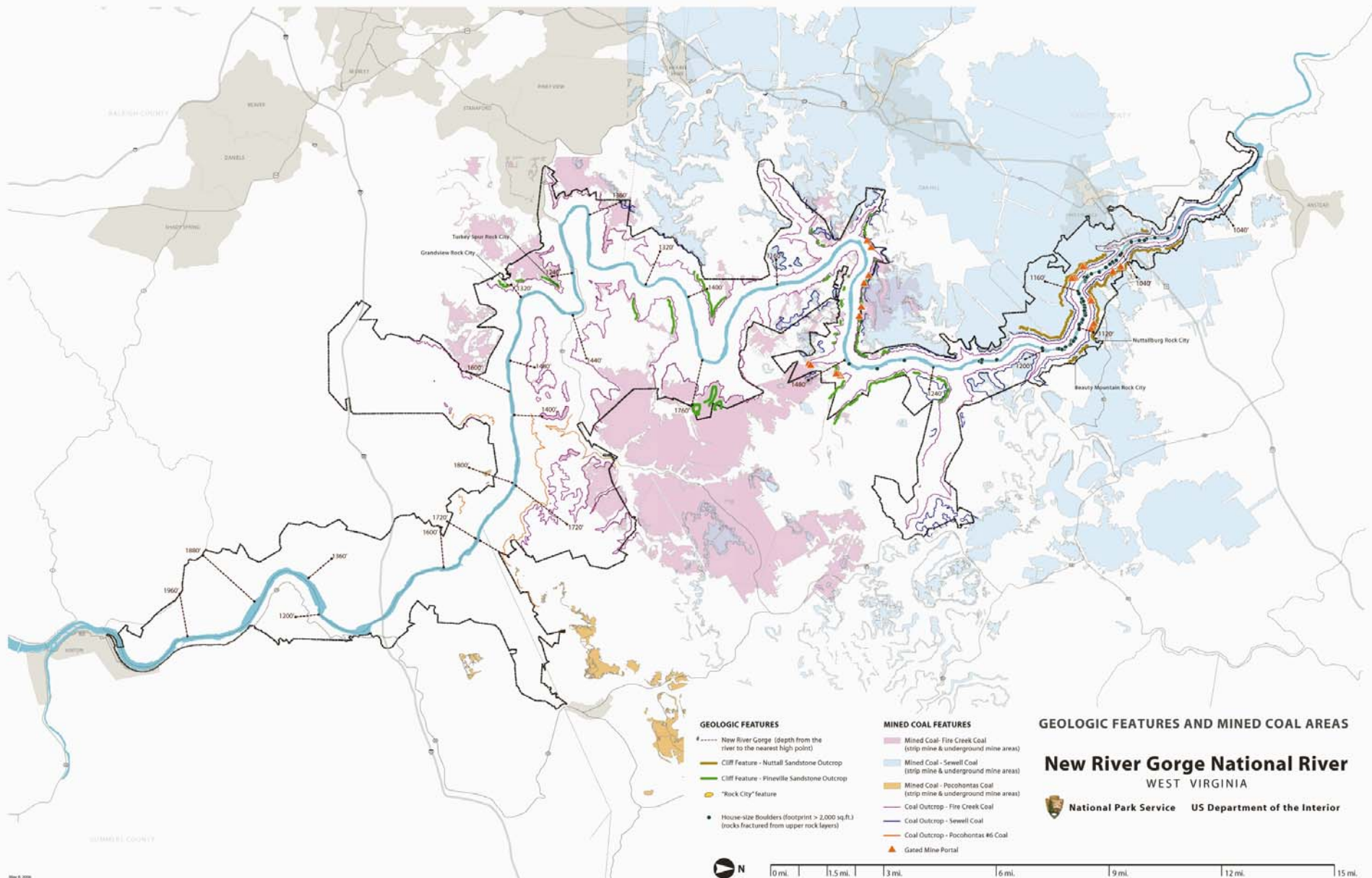
Flowing water is the definitive creative force of the New River Gorge. The New River, one of the oldest rivers in the world, continues to sculpt the longest and deepest river gorge in the Appalachian Mountains.

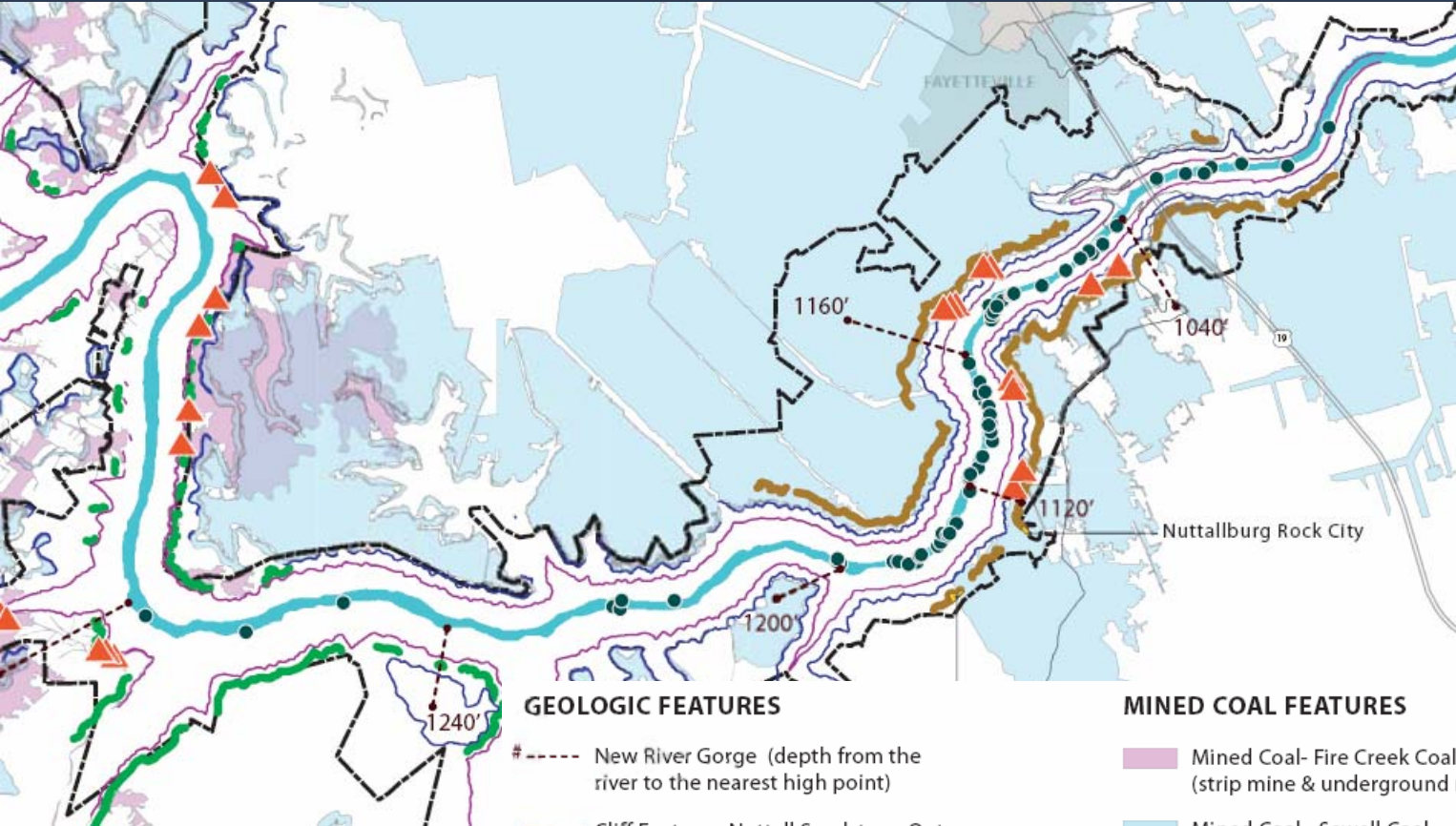
Geologic Features – GMP Issues

Experiencing the Park's Geologic Features

- many stories about the park's geologic features – if told – would greatly enhance the visitor experience
- poor access to and through the park limits where visitors can go and how they can experience the park's geologic features







GEOLOGIC FEATURES

- # - - - New River Gorge (depth from the river to the nearest high point)
- Cliff Feature - Nuttall Sandstone Outcrop
- Cliff Feature - Pineville Sandstone Outcrop
- "Rock City" feature
- House-size Boulders (footprint > 2,000 sq.ft.) (rocks fractured from upper rock layers)

MINED COAL FEATURES

- Mined Coal- Fire Creek Coal (strip mine & underground mine areas)
- Mined Coal - Sewell Coal (strip mine & underground mine areas)
- Mined Coal - Pocohontas Coal (strip mine & underground mine areas)
- Coal Outcrop - Fire Creek Coal
- Coal Outcrop - Sewell Coal
- Coal Outcrop - Pocohontas #6 Coal
- ▲ Gated Mine Portal



What's Most Important at the Park?



Significance Statement 3

The Park's Forest

New River Gorge National River lies at the core of a globally significant forest, contains the most diverse flora of any river gorge in central and southern Appalachia, and provides essential habitat for endangered mammals and rare birds and amphibians.

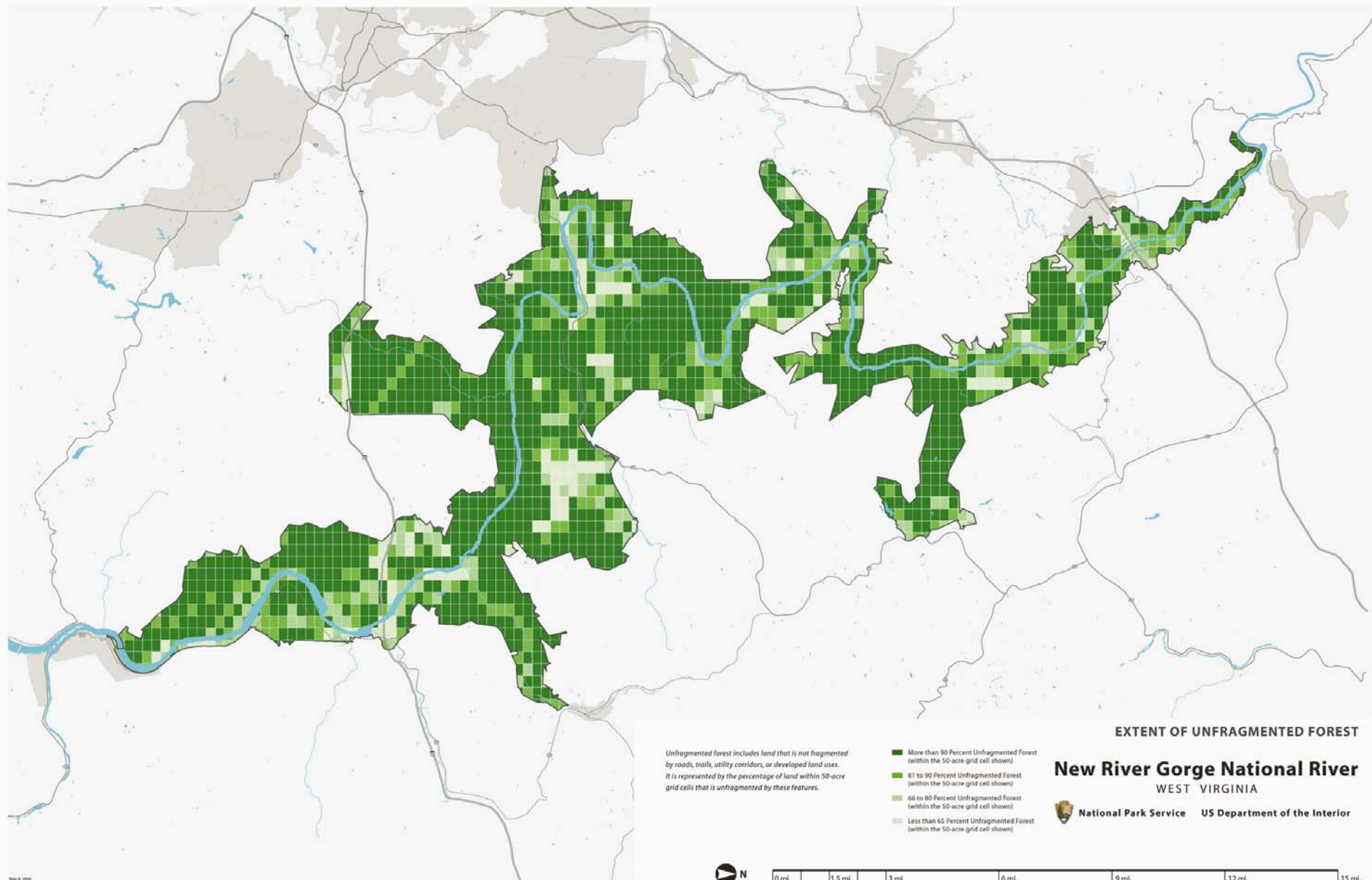


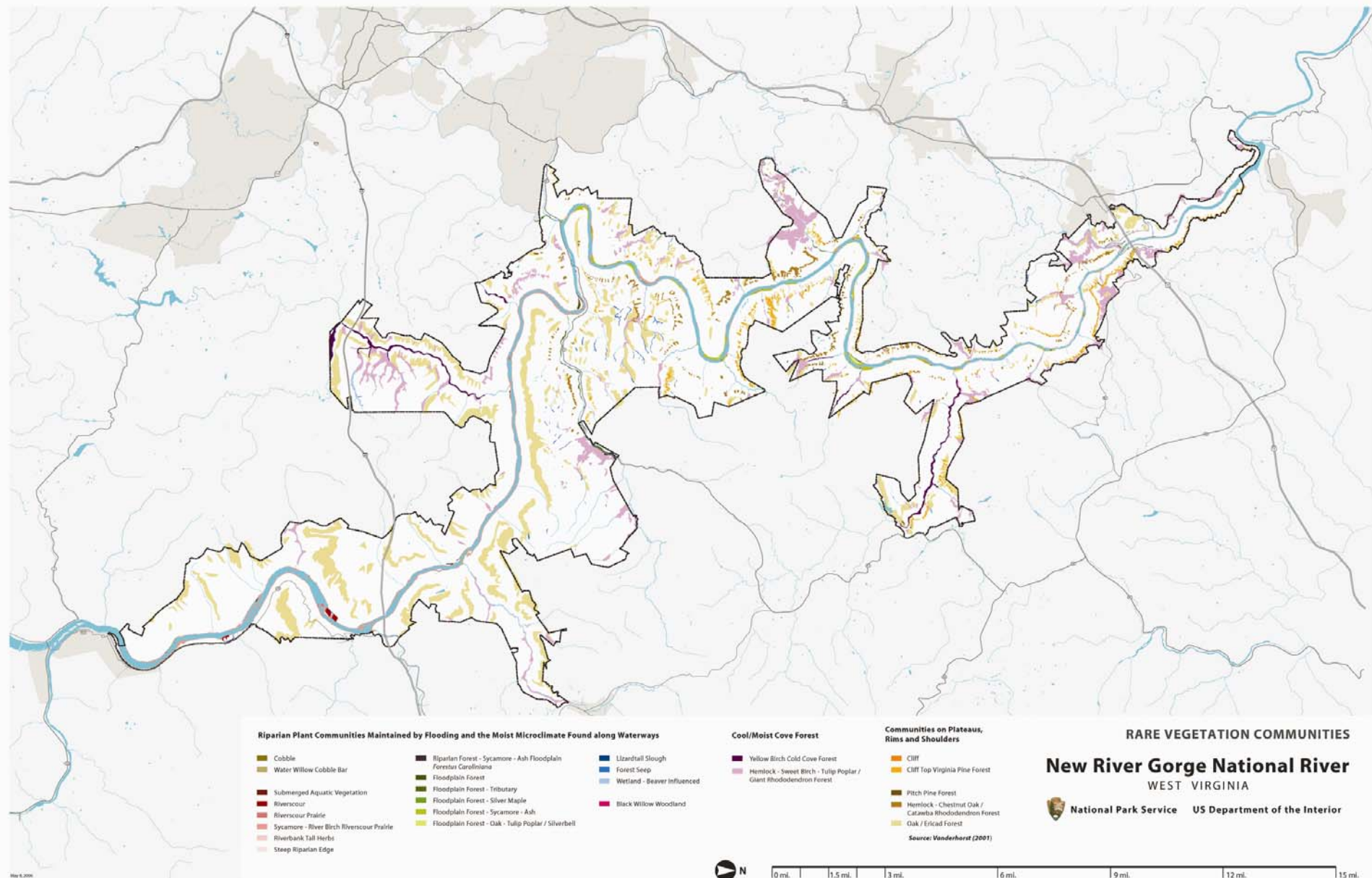
The Park's Forest – GMP Issues

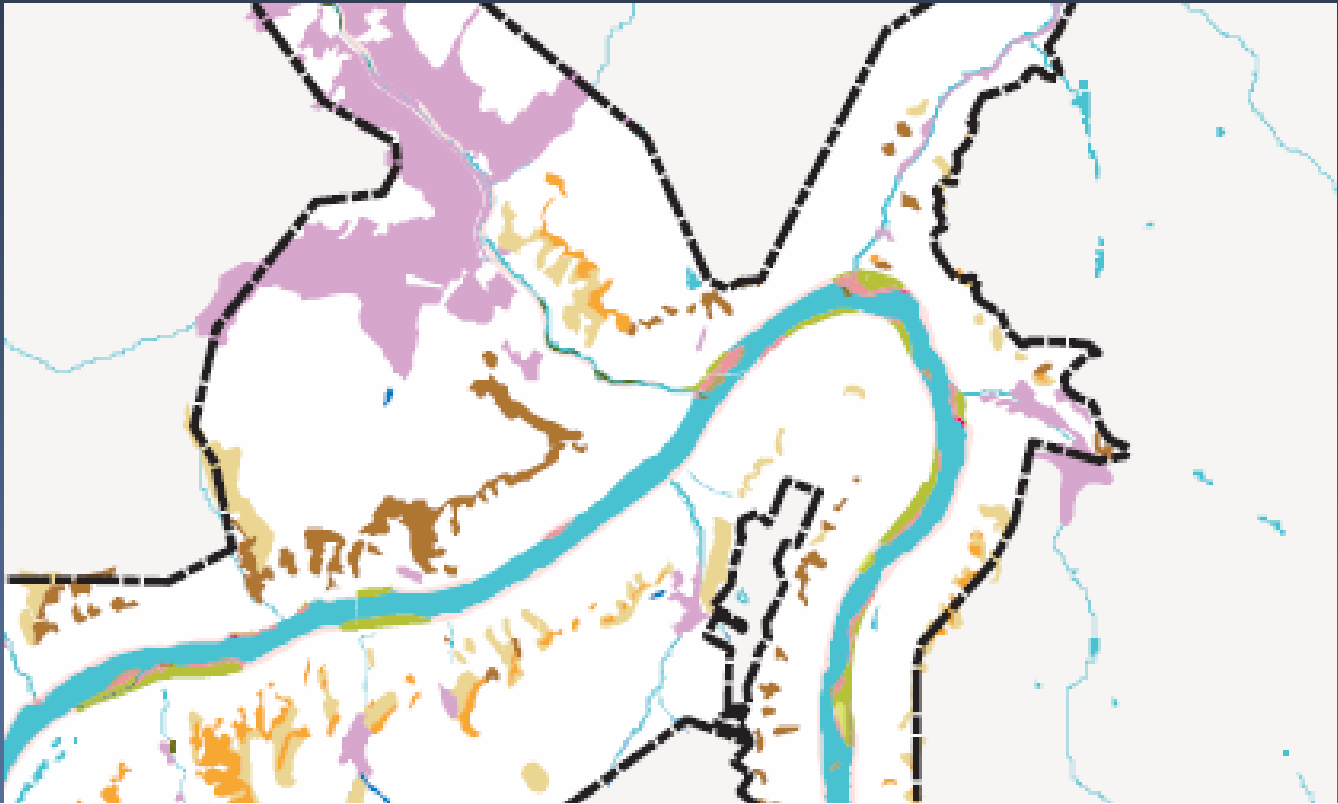
Threats to Forest and Wildlife

- the park's forest is threatened by air pollution, exotic pests, fragmentation, and non-native species
- the park's wildlife is threatened by forest fragmentation, new development, deer, and non-native species
- some traditional subsistence lifestyle uses threaten resources









Riparian Plant Communities Maintained by Flooding and the Moist Microclimate Found along Waterways

- Cobble
- Water Willow Cobble Bar
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
- Riverscour
- Riverscour Prairie
- Sycamore - River Birch Riverscour Prairie
- Riverbank Tall Herbs
- Steep Riparian Edge
- Riparian Forest - Sycamore - Ash Floodplain *Forestus Caroliniana*
- Floodplain Forest
- Floodplain Forest - Tributary
- Floodplain Forest - Silver Maple
- Floodplain Forest - Sycamore - Ash
- Floodplain Forest - Oak - Tulip Poplar / Silverbell

Cool/Moist Cove Forest

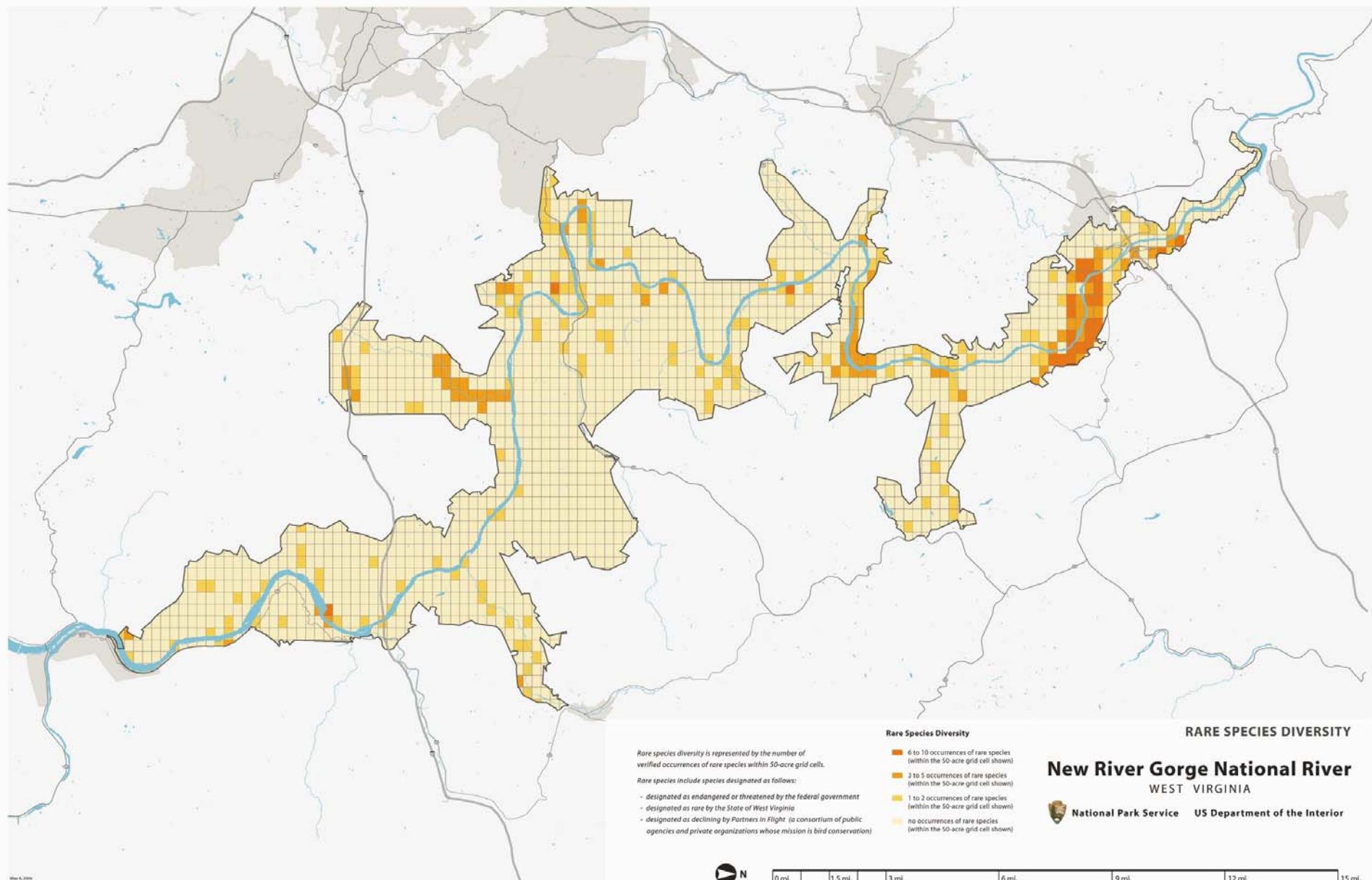
- Lizardtail Slough
- Forest Seep
- Wetland - Beaver Influenced
- Black Willow Woodland

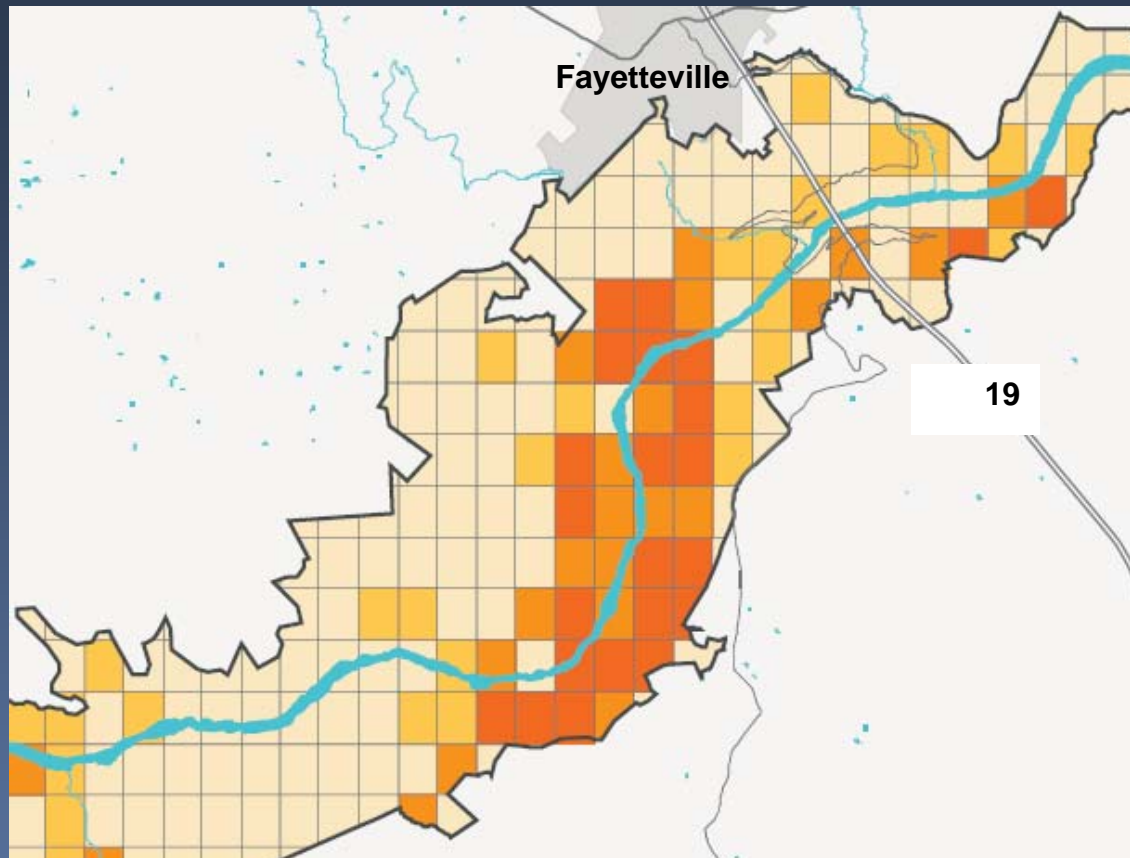
- Yellow Birch Cold Cove Forest
- Hemlock - Sweet Birch - Tulip Poplar / Giant Rhododendron Forest

Communities on Plateaus, Rims and Shoulders

- Cliff
- Cliff Top Virginia Pine Forest
- Pitch Pine Forest
- Hemlock - Chestnut Oak / Catawba Rhododendron Forest
- Oak / Ericad Forest

Source: Vanderhorst (2001)





Rare Species Diversity

Rare species diversity is represented by the number of verified occurrences of rare species within 50-acre grid cells.

Rare species include species designated as follows:

- designated as endangered or threatened by the federal government
- designated as rare by the State of West Virginia
- designated as declining by Partners in Flight (a consortium of public agencies and private organizations whose mission is bird conservation)

- 6 to 10 occurrences of rare species (within the 50-acre grid cell shown)
- 3 to 5 occurrences of rare species (within the 50-acre grid cell shown)
- 1 to 2 occurrences of rare species (within the 50-acre grid cell shown)
- no occurrences of rare species (within the 50-acre grid cell shown)



What's Most Important at the Park?



Significance Statement 4

Outstanding Historic Features

New River Gorge National River contains a large, outstanding and representative group of historic places that testify to the experiences of those diverse people who settled and developed this part of Appalachia between the 19th and mid-20th centuries.



Outstanding Historic Places – GMP Issues

Threats to Outstanding Historic Places/ Visitor Experience and Access

- natural deterioration, vandalism, lack of maintenance, weather, and/or lack of occupancy threaten loss of many of the park's remaining cultural resources
- poor roads and trails restrict or prohibit access to many cultural resources
- important stories about the region's cultural heritage are not being told and are in danger of being lost

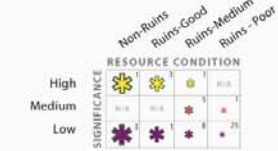




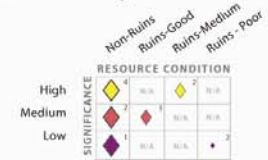
New River Gorge National River

General Management Plan

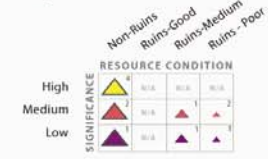
Coal Resources



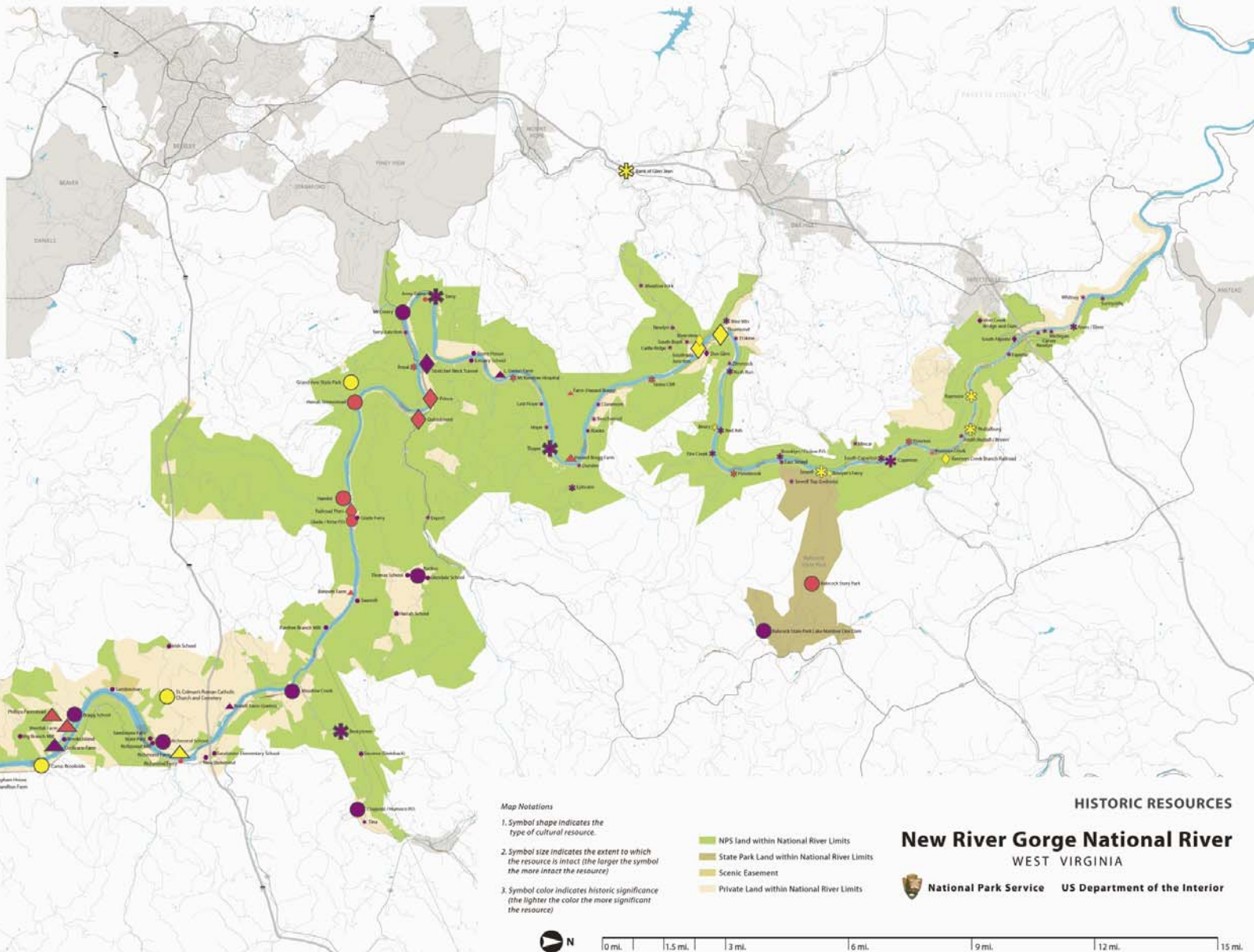
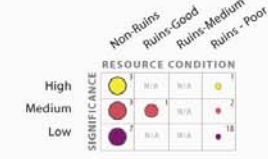
Railroading Resources



Agriculture Resources



Other Historic Resources



- Map Notations**
1. Symbol shape indicates the type of cultural resource.
 2. Symbol size indicates the extent to which the resource is intact (the larger the symbol the more intact the resource)
 3. Symbol color indicates historic significance (the lighter the color the more significant the resource)

- NPS land within National River Limits
- State Park Land within National River Limits
- Scenic Easement
- Private Land within National River Limits

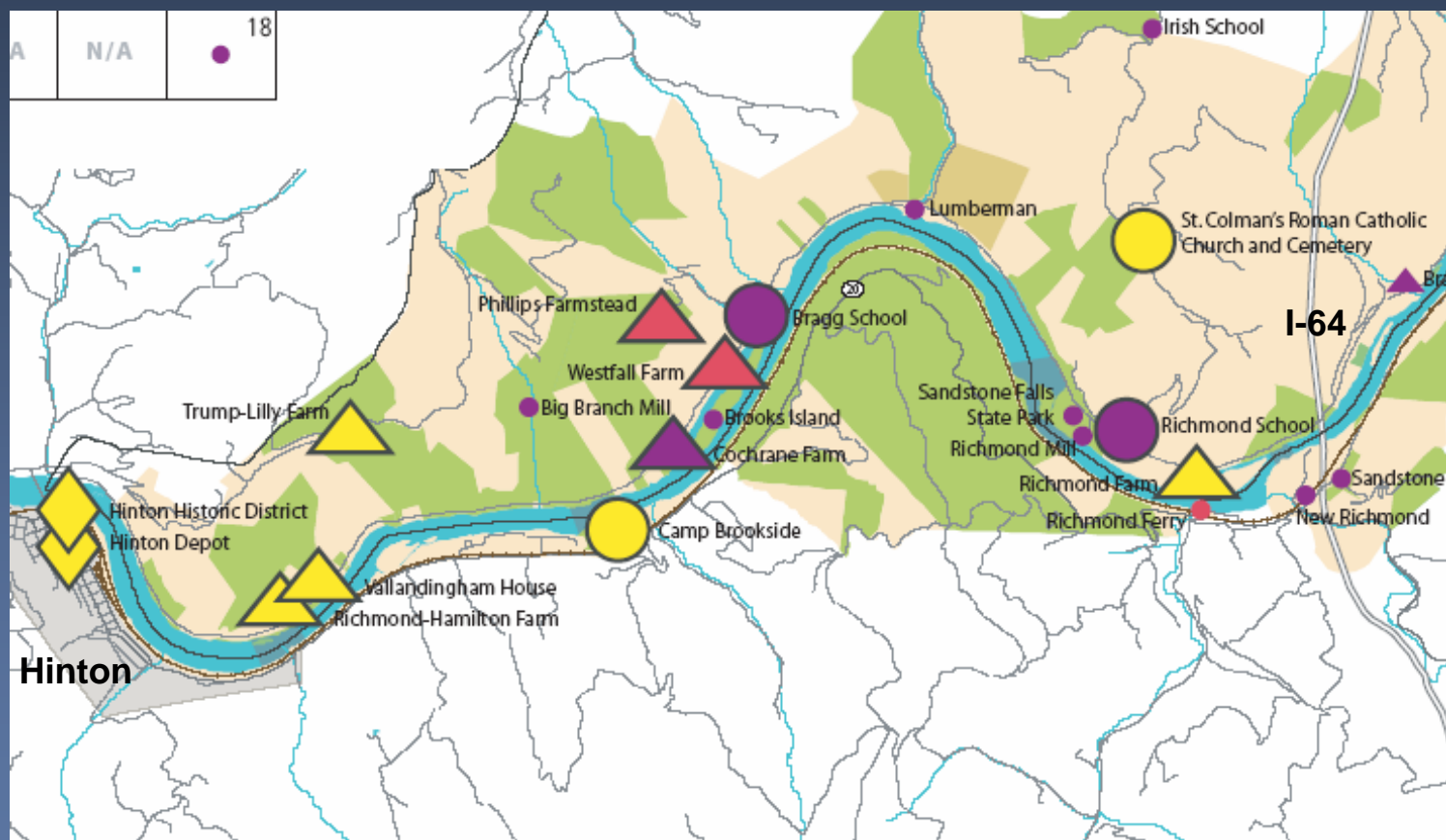
HISTORIC RESOURCES

New River Gorge National River

WEST VIRGINIA

National Park Service US Department of the Interior







What's Most Important at the Park?



Significance Statement 5

Dramatic Views

Broad views of unbroken forest, steep gorge walls, and a river both tranquil and turbulent are punctuated by pastoral landscapes and industrial ruins to produce dramatic and vivid views from the river, along trails and rural roads, and from rocky overlooks.

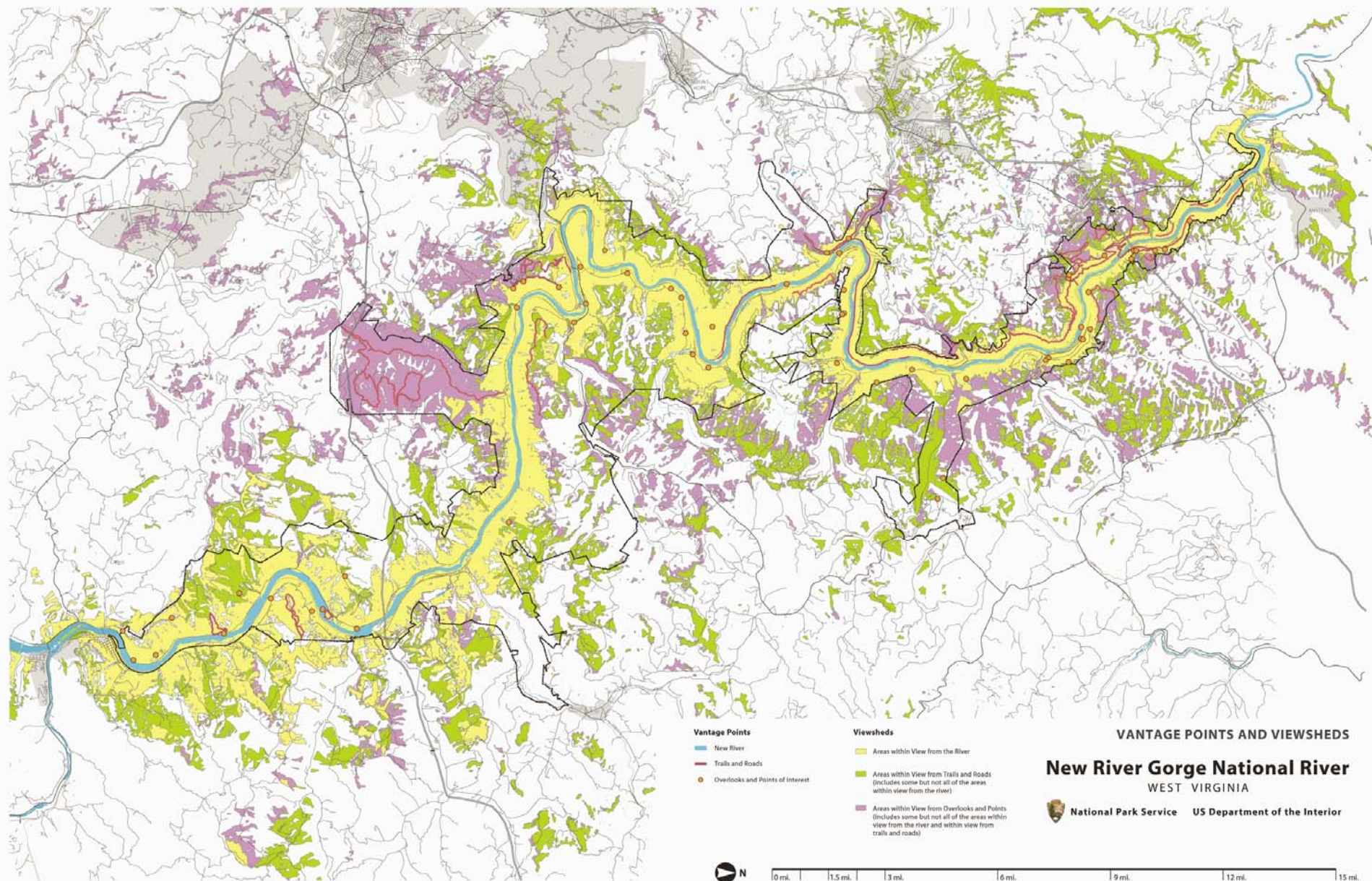


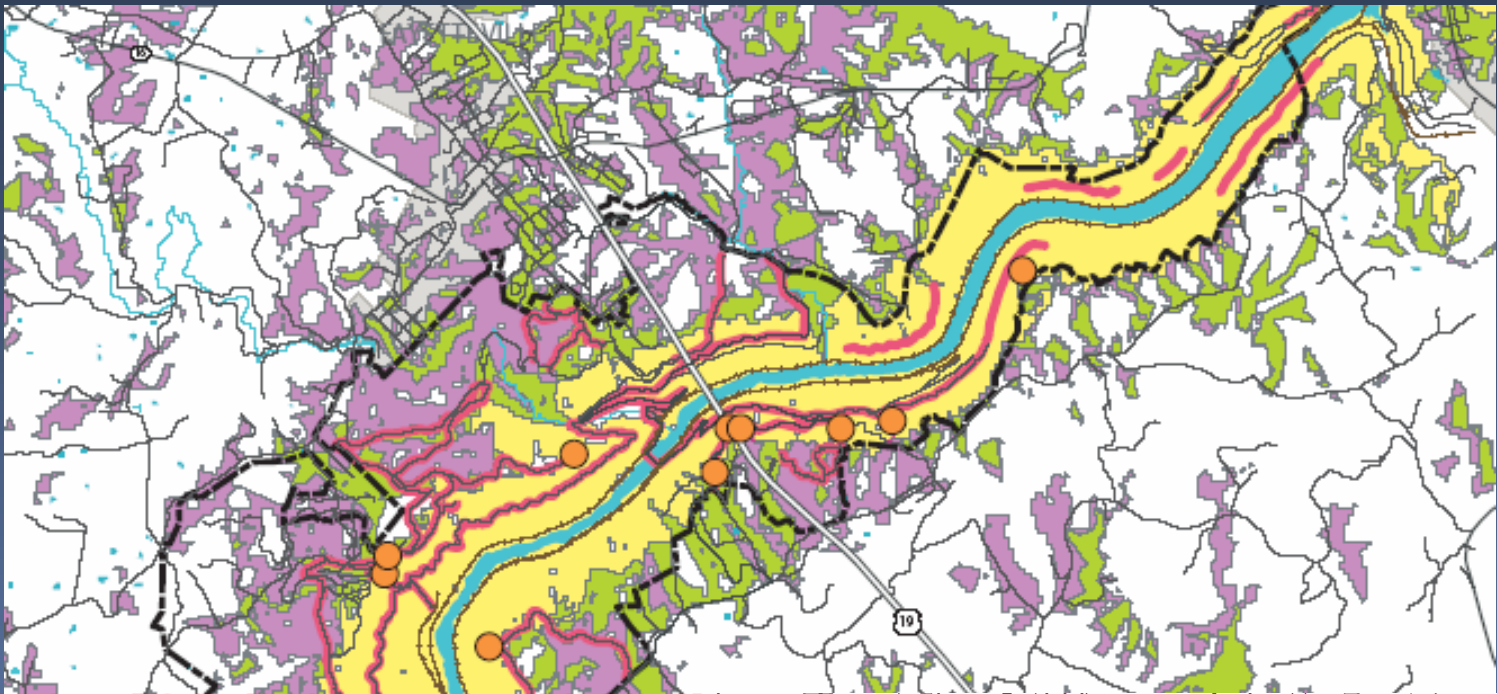
Dramatic Views – GMP Issues

Threats to Scenic Character/Visitor Experience and Access




- new development within the Gorge and on the rim threatens the scenic character of the park's viewshed
- disagreement exists regarding the vantage points from which the viewshed should be defined
- many scenic viewpoints in the park are currently not accessible










Vantage Points

-  New River
-  Trails and Roads
-  Overlooks and Points of Interest

Viewsheds

-  Areas within View from the River
-  Areas within View from Trails and Roads (includes some but not all of the areas within view from the river)
-  Areas within View from Overlooks and Points (includes some but not all of the areas within view from the river and within view from trails and roads)



What's Most Important at the Park?



Significance Statement 6

Exceptional Opportunities for Visitors

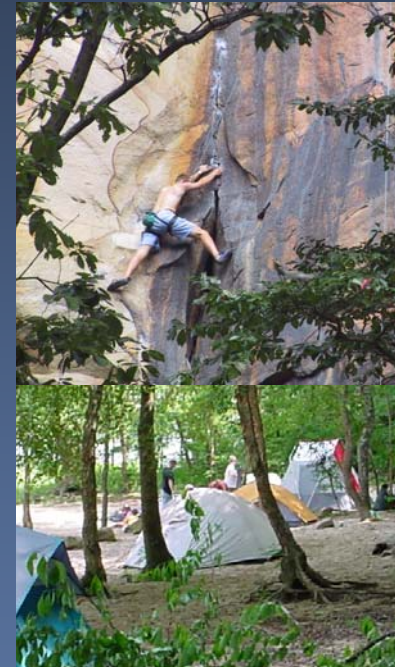
New River Gorge National River affords exceptional opportunities for exploration, adventure, discovery, solitude and community.



Exceptional Opportunities for Visitors – GMP Issues

Visitor Experience and Visitor Use

- many park visitors would like enhanced facilities and/or new day use areas for their activities developed in the park
- the small number of non-designated primitive campsites does not provide camping opportunities desired by many visitors
- facilities for different types of visitors are not balanced





New River Gorge National River

General Management Plan

RIVER TRIPS

New River (upstream)



EXISTING VISITOR USE

- High Visitor Use
- Moderate Visitor Use
- Low Visitor Use

LAND OWNERSHIP

- NPS Land within National River Limits
- State Park Land within National River Limits
- Scenic Easement
- Private Land within National River Limits

STATE ROADS

- Primary State Road (Paved)
- Secondary State Road (Paved)
- State Maintained Gravel Road
- Not Maintained Road

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ROADS

- NPS Maintained Gravel Road

PRIVATE ROADS

- Private Road

EXISTING VISITOR USE OPPORTUNITIES

- Birding
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Climbing
- Hiking - NPS Trails
- Hiking - Other Trails
- Picnicking
- Sightseeing - Overlooks and Points of Interest
- Sightseeing - New River Gorge Scenic Drives
- Camping - Minimum Development Camping
- Camping - Group Camping
- Camping - Public Campground
- Boating - Public River Access also see River Trips legend above
- Boating - Private River Access also see River Trips legend above

EXISTING VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES

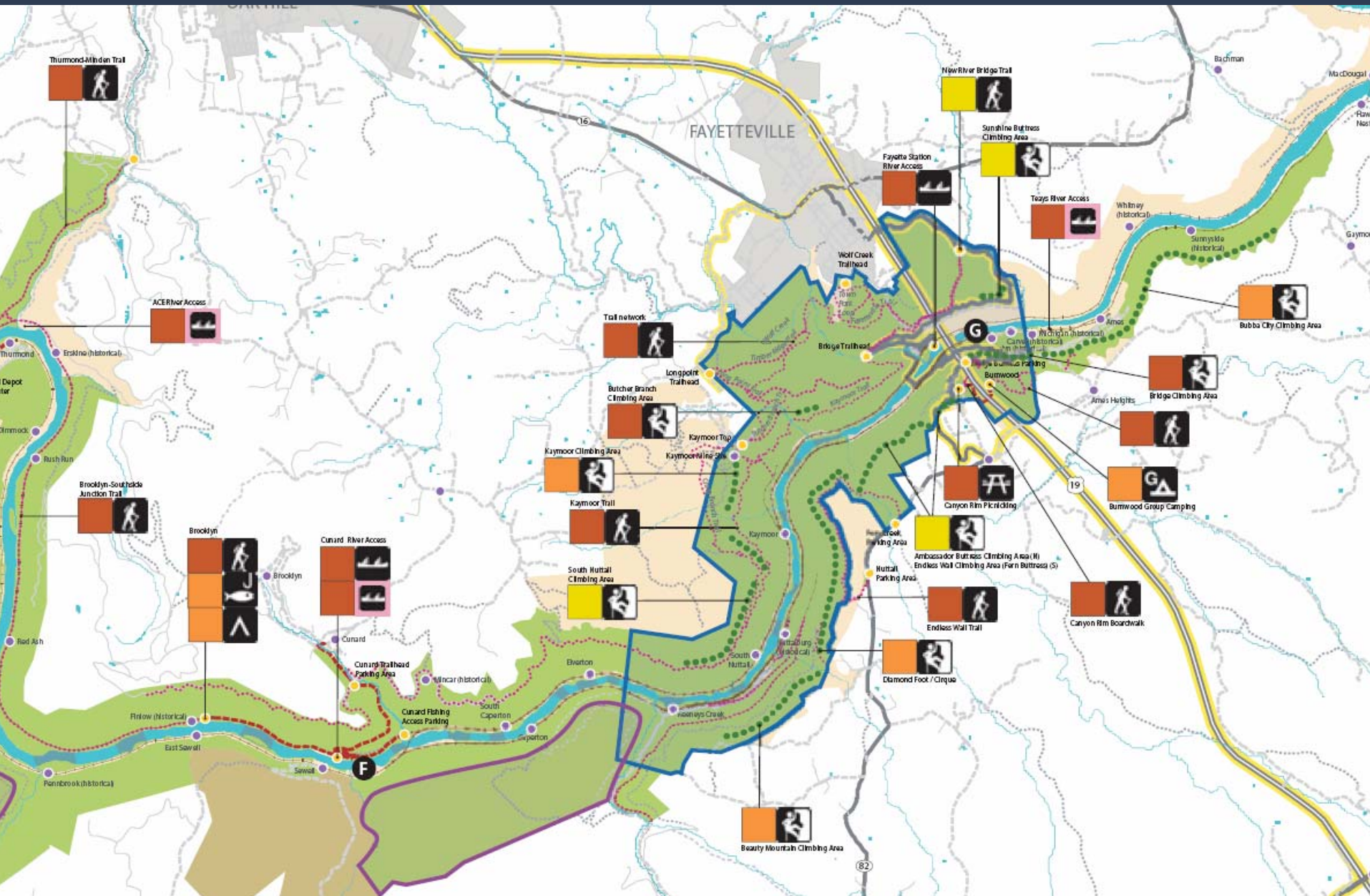
New River Gorge National River WEST VIRGINIA



National Park Service US Department of the Interior



0 mi. | 1.5 mi. | 3 mi. | 6 mi. | 9 mi. | 12 mi. | 15 mi.

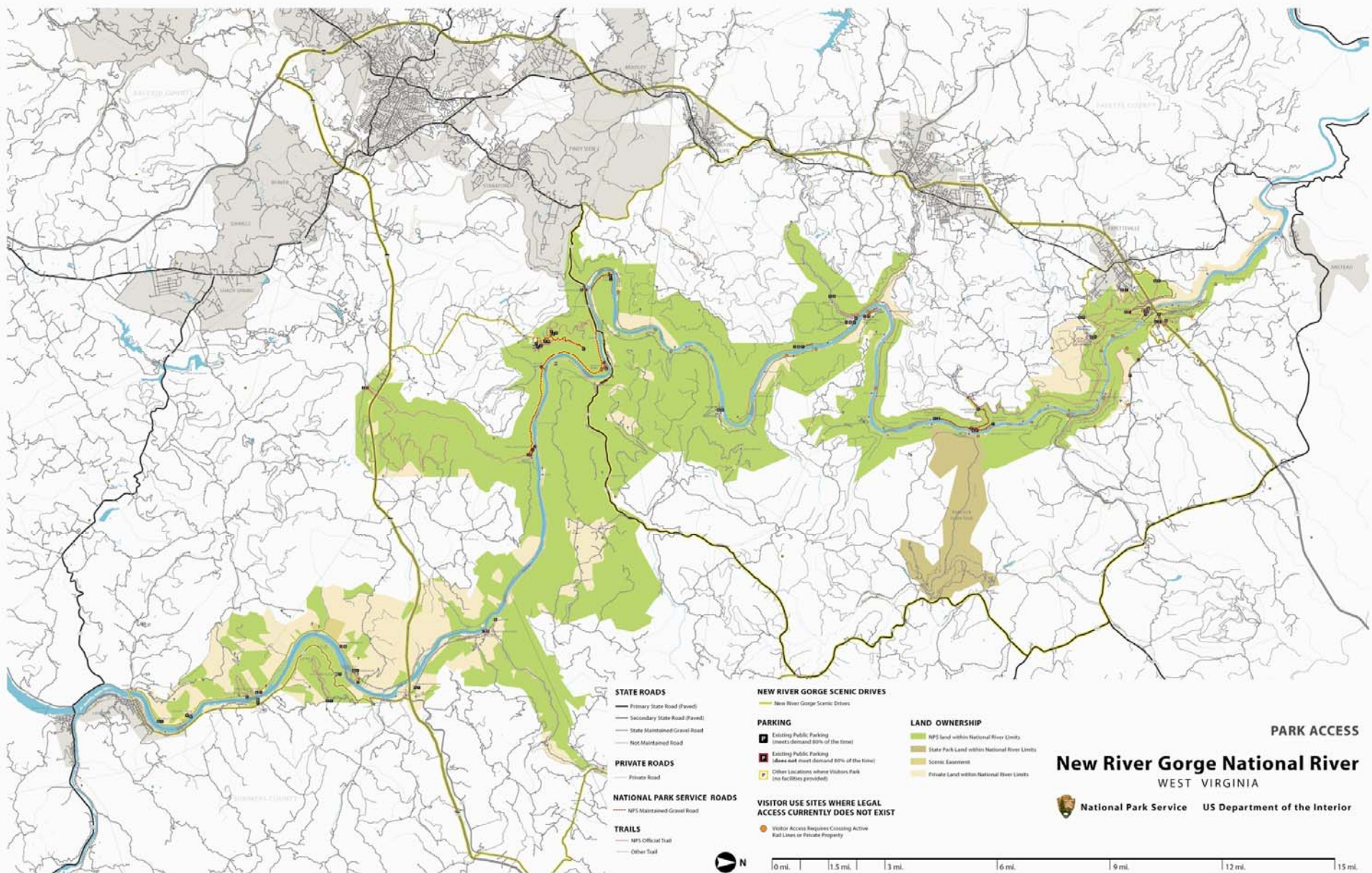


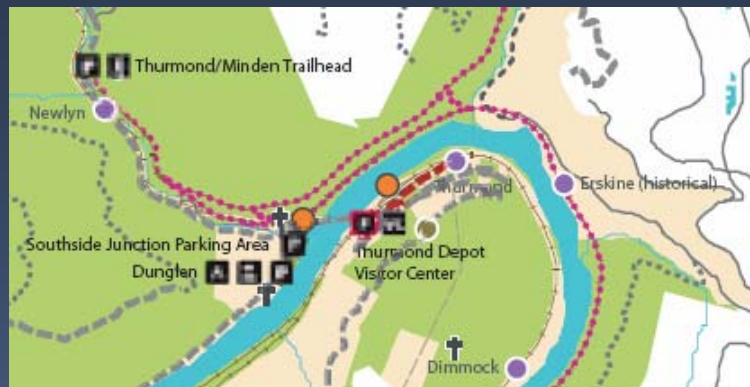
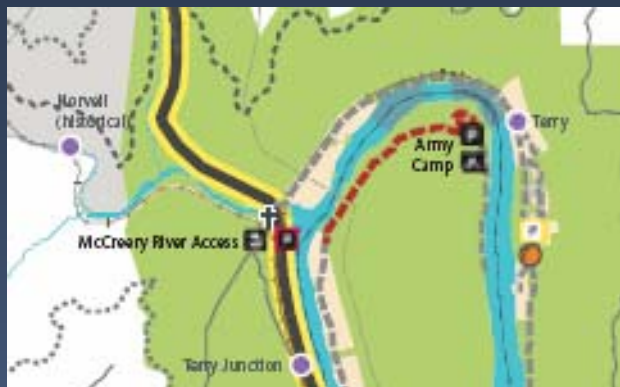
Park Access – GMP Issues

Poor Access

- poor road access to and through the park limits where visitors can go and the experiences they can have
- the demand for parking exceeds capacity at many visitor use sites
- few developed trails are available
- active railroads are barriers to accessing the river







STATE ROADS

- Primary State Road (Paved)
- Secondary State Road (Paved)
- State Maintained Gravel Road
- Not Maintained Road

PRIVATE ROADS

- Private Road

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ROADS

- NPS Maintained Gravel Road

TRAILS

- NPS Official Trail
- Other Trail

NEW RIVER GORGE SCENIC DRIVES

- New River Gorge Scenic Drives

PARKING

- Existing Public Parking (meets demand 80% of the time)
- Existing Public Parking (does not meet demand 80% of the time)
- Other Locations where Visitors Park (no facilities provided)

VISITOR USE SITES WHERE LEGAL ACCESS CURRENTLY DOES NOT EXIST

- Visitor Access Requires Crossing Active Rail Lines or Private Property